7. CORPS INSPECTIONS

The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers has established minimum standards for the construction, operation, maintenance, and preparedness of flood control works that must be met in order for the FCW to be eligible for federal rehabilitation assistance after a flood. This chapter describes the inspections that the Corps conducts in order to monitor the condition of levees, floodwalls, channels, and other FCWs. The information described in this chapter is supplemented in a flowchart in Appendix B, which summarizes the relationships between the Corps' inspections and the status of a project's eligibility for rehabilitation assistance. Additional information on the Corps' inspections can be found in Appendix C, which is the Inspection Guide used during all Corps inspections of non-federal FCWs.

Figure 7.1, *Inspection of pumping station controls. (OK)*

One important note on Corps inspections and project ratings is that individual sponsors are not treated completely independently, but the Corps inspects and rates the entire "hydrologically independent" flood control project as one system. This means that if there are multiple public sponsors with responsibility over sections of a single flood control system, then they'll all pass or fail their inspections together. This only makes sense, because the entire area will flood if one section fails during high water. It's the responsibility of the multiple public sponsors, not of the Corps, to coordinate all necessary responsibilities and obligations under the RIP.

7.1 Entering the RIP – The Initial Eligibility Inspection (IEI)

To enter the RIP, you should contact your local Corps Emergency Management Office. Upon receiving a request to join the RIP, the Corps will conduct an Initial Eligibility Inspection (IEI) of your non-federal flood control project, which will include an evaluation of the technical capabilities of your project, as well as a review of project operation, maintenance, and preparedness. The purpose of the IEI is to determine whether the project meets the specific minimum criteria and standards set forth by the Corps for providing reliable flood protection. During the IEI, the Corps will evaluate things such as the standards of construction, physical location of the FCW, the cross-section of levees, and the elevation of levees and floodwalls in relation to the anticipated flood levels. The Corps normally conducts IEIs when FCWs are undamaged during low water or normal water-level

> **Active**: A status applied to flood control projects concerning their participation in the Rehabilitation and Inspection Program under authority of PL 84-99. An Active project has met the Corps' criteria for entry into the program, and continues to meet ongoing criteria for continuing eligibility. Only Active projects may receive PL 84-99 rehabilitation assistance to repair damage caused by a flood event or coastal storm.

conditions. This allows for more of the FCW to be inspected, so the condition of the project can be determined more accurately.

After the IEI is conducted, you'll receive a letter with the inspection results. If your project is rated "Acceptable," it is immediately placed in an Active status in the RIP. If it's rated Minimally Acceptable, it's placed in an Active status in the RIP and the letter will indicate the deficiencies that would need to be corrected in order for your project to meet the Corps' standards for entering the program, as well as a time frame for making these repairs. If the project is rated Unacceptable, the sponsor will be notified of the inspection results and the project will be placed in an Inactive status in the RIP (or may not be entered into the program at all). In this case, the deficiencies may have come from poor maintenance, or from more fundamental aspects of the FCW such as inadequate elevation or cross section in relation to the anticipated flood levels. Further inspections of a project receiving an IEI rating of Unacceptable will not be made until the Corps has been notified in writing that such corrective action work has been completed. If you don't agree with the results of the Corps' evaluation, you may choose at your own expense to provide a detailed engineering study (certified by a licensed professional engineer) of the FCW and request that the Corps reconsider its evaluation.

7.2 Maintaining Active Status – Continuing Eligibility Inspections (CEIs)

To maintain an Active status in the RIP, you're required to provide ongoing maintenance of the project. The Corps monitors this ongoing maintenance through Continuing Eligibility Inspections (CEIs), which are conducted at least every other year, though many Corps districts have elected to hold them on a more frequent basis in order to ensure compliance with the requirements of the RIP. CEIs typically don't go into the same level of detail that IEIs do, since project features such as elevation or cross section don't need to be reevaluated during continuing inspections. However, the majority of project components are inspected using the same criteria that were used during the Initial Eligibility Inspection.

If, during the CEI, the FCW is found to meet the Corps' standards for the RIP program, it will remain Active in the RIP. If it's found to be "Minimally Acceptable," based on deficiencies in some area of operation or maintenance, you'll be required to correct the noted deficiencies, and will be given a timeframe to make those repairs. If the repairs are completed to the Corps' specifications, the FCW will remain Active in the program. If the repairs are not completed within a timeframe, the FCW will be put into an Inactive status in the RIP. If the FCW is given an "Unacceptable" rating, then the FCW will immediately be put into an Inactive status in the RIP. You will regain your Active status as soon as you send the Corps documentation showing that the repairs are complete.

7.3 Inspection Methodology

Using the Inspection Guide found in Appendix C, each of the individual items or components of the project are rated according to the following table:

INDIVIDUAL ITEM / COMPONENT RATING		
SYMBOL	***CONDITION***	***DEFINITION***
A	**Acceptable**	The rated item is in satisfactory, acceptable condition, and will function as designed and intended during the next flood event.
M	**Minimally Acceptable**	The rated item has a minor deficiency that needs to be corrected. The minor deficiency will not seriously impair the functioning of the item during the next flood event. The overall reliability of the project will be lowered because of the minor deficiency.
U	**Unacceptable**	The rated item is unsatisfactory. The deficiency is so serious that the item will not adequately function in the next flood event, compromising the project's ability to provide reliable flood protection.

Once each project feature is rated, the inspector will look through the list of rated items to identify the lowest rating that was given for a project feature. The overall project is rated based on the lowest-rated project feature, and the overall project status is confirmed as either Active or Inactive in the RIP depending on the overall project rating.

DETERMINATION OF OVERALL PROJECT RATING AND PROJECT STATUS		
If the lowest rated project component is:	**Then this results in an overall project rating of:**	**And the project status in the RIP is:**
Acceptable	Acceptable	Active
Minimally Acceptable	Minimally Acceptable	Active, though status is contingent upon completion of required work.
Unacceptable	Unacceptable	Inactive

Finally, the overall project ratings are defined as follows:

OVERALL PROJECT RATING		
SYMBOL	***CONDITION***	***DEFINITION***
A	**Acceptable**	No immediate work required, other than routine maintenance. The flood control project will function as designed and intended, with a high degree of reliability, and necessary cyclic maintenance is being adequately performed.
M	**Minimally Acceptable**	One or more deficient conditions exist in the flood control project that needs to be improved / corrected. However, the project will essentially function as designed and intended, but with a lesser degree of reliability than what the project should provide. Specific items of the project must be improved / corrected.
U	**Unacceptable**	One or more deficient conditions that can reasonably be foreseen to prevent the project from functioning as designed, intended, or required.